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## BOOKS FOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS—RECOMMENDED BY THEMSELVES

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Newton High School

"Books are the food of youth, the delight of old age; the ornament of prosperity; the refuge and comfort of adversity; a delight at home and no hinderance abroad; companions by night, in travelling, in the country." Very finely and very truly has Cicero spoken, although in these days of the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls movements, organized athletics in the secondary schools, departmental and musical clubs, together with less commendable amusements and interests, it does not seem that books can be more than a side issue. However that may be, whether or not students of this day and generation are reading as widely and as substantially as those of "the old school," they *are* reading.

On account of a tremendously increased circulation in the adult department, many public libraries have widened their scope to include an intermediate branch which cares for boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and nineteen years. There is generally a librarian who devotes her entire time to this work, noting the circulation of individual books, investigating new publications with a view to using them, and guiding young readers. High-school libraries are becoming more than convenient places for exhibiting athletic trophies and for accommodating the over-flow from the study hall.

Numerous catalogues of books for suggested reading for boys and girls in the period of adolescence have been made by educators and imposed by teachers. The great question

concerning these lists is, "Are they meeting the needs of the high-school student?" To be sure they include the books which he *ought* to read, but does he read them? Shouldn't we "teach the young idea how to shoot" very much more accurately if we consulted him as to what he actually considers worth his while reading? Undoubtedly we should have to sift his judgment, but in the end we should determine more wisely what his needs really are and what satisfies them.

Several times a year, especially just before vacations, many teachers dictate for spare time employment long lists of books which they have enjoyed or which have been recommended to them. I now have filed away in a manilla envelope numerous such dictations which as yet form a part of my great unread. After attempting several of these teacher-imposed books, I turned either to the library catalogue or to my own resources for advice. The average student feels, "*She* (meaning the instructor) doesn't know what I like to read. Because she enjoys those dry old things, she thinks I should." And to a certain extent is not the student right in his judgment, although it may be strongly tinged with the adolescent impulse to set himself up as an authority?

At Newton High School a few months ago the teachers in the English Department, at the suggestion of Mr. Thomas, asked each student in the various classes to write on a slip of paper the names of the four books, read within the last year, which he would advise his classmates to read. No restrictions as to type or length were set. It was impressed upon the minds of the pupils, however, that these suggestions should not be made with the definite object of pleasing the instructor. In each case they should be the honest recommendations of books which had really been enjoyed, had been in some way helpful, or had opened up new channels of thought. As soon as the material was brought together, it was carefully scrutinized, and divided into twelve groups:—biography and diary; economics and government; fiction; history; juvenile (boys and girls); magazines; poetry; science; standard (American and English); travel and exploration; war; and miscellaneous. The number of times each book was mentioned was noted. Lists were then made, the material under each classification being arranged alphabetically by authors in order that a rough idea as to the relative popularity of writers might be gained. The following table makes clear the numerical results of the experiment.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90	Total No. of books recommended
Biography	†14	1	1		3					1									44
Economics and Government		3																	3
Fiction	408	71	41	19	16	4	12	2	5	5	18	5	2	2	1			2	1805
History	18		1																21
Juvenile																			
} Boys	93	24	10	5	4	1		1											225
} Girls	56	16	4	2		6				2	2								201
																			426
Magazines	16	6	1	3		1	1	1			2								93
Poetry	20	5																	30
Science	27	2																	31
Standard																			
} American	17	5	2	2	2	1		1				2		1					167
} English	35	19	13	8	4	3	2	3	1		3	6		1					452
																			619
Travel and Exploration	11	1																	13
War	24	5	1	4	1	1	1	1			2	1		1					166
Miscellaneous	19	1	1																24

\*Figure at head of column represents number of times titles were recommended.

†Figure in column represents number of titles recommended.

From this tabulation it will be seen that works of fiction comprise 53.5 per cent. of the total number of books recommended. Although this seems a rather high percentage, it is gratifying to note that most of them were of a high grade. Comparatively few "best sellers" appeared. The desire to lift one's self out of one's surroundings and to project one's self into a new environment and among new associates, is especially strong at this period and is satisfied by these mental journeys from one's everyday life.

Six hundred nineteen standard books, American and English were mentioned, forming 18.9 per cent. of the total. When it is understood that the works of only major writers are included here, the per centage will not seem so deplorably low. The fact that only one hundred sixty-seven American classics as over against four hundred fifty-two English works were recommended, brings the question to mind. "Are we laying sufficient stress on our own literature"? American literature is *not* a branch of English. It is a distinctive body in itself, deeply rooted in our national life, tracing our national ideal of democracy and freedom, and reflecting our environment, customs, and institutions. In this, as in many other matters, we have paid too hum-

ble deference to old world productions. We have exalted Carlyle, where we have paid but little heed to Emerson. Scott's novels have been read and re-read, whereas Cooper's have been allowed to grow dusty on the shelves. Bryant we confuse with Byron, and Poe with Pope.

The per centage of juvenile books chosen (13 per cent,) is not large when we realize that many pupils enter the secondary school at twelve or thirteen years of age. Most of these suggestions came from first year students and a few from second year. The boys seem to have read more widely, while the girls have concentrated on fewer books. The difference in the total number recommended by each class, however, is small. *Little Women*, *Anne of Avonlea*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *Anne of the Island*, are pronounced favorites among the girls. The boys are more fond of sets, the Tom Swift, Roger Paulding, Submarine Chums, and various Boy Scouts series figuring prominently. The Peggy Owen, Motor Girls, Jane Stuart, Molly Brown, Blue Bonnet, Grace Harlow, and Little Colonel series, were mentioned by the girls. Librarians are discouraging the reading of series, for after the first book the quality of the following dwindles. Then, too, there is the danger of adhering too closely to the work of a few authors to the neglect of that of others more worth while.

With the avalanche of war literature which has been hurled upon us, it is curious to note that only one hundred sixty-six recommendations were made in this class. Ian Hay's *The First Hundred Thousand* proved itself here, as elsewhere, "the most popular book on the war." The books which scored most heavily were, as we should expect, those which were written from a personal point of view and which deal directly with the war itself rather than with conditions causing it or problems arising from it.

We do not expect students in the high school to be interested in government and economics to the extent of reading treatises, nor do we expect them to indulge in histories for recreation. It seems, however, that poetry, biography, and books of travel and exploration suffered unduly. The old problem of creating a love for poetry arises again and again, and rather than meet it squarely, the tendency is to evade it. Even if this were not an extraneous question, it is, however, one too large to be considered here.

If books of biography are suggested, there should be a hearty and appreciative response. This is just the time when boys and girls are breaking the bonds which have kept them in their own world and are beginning to feel



themselves a part of the new life in which they are taking their places. Although at the beginning of the period the desire to stand alone, to assert one's authority, to receive respectful attention from one's elders, is strong, toward the end we find a sympathetic understanding of the struggles and hardships, the hopes and aspirations, the successes of others. Seventeen and eighteen year old girls will enter sympathetically into the reading of such biographies as those of Alice Freeman Palmer, Mary Lyons, Helen Keller. Nor can the lives of Lincoln, Washington, John Muir fail to appeal to boys of the same age. Intimate knowledge of the experiences of men and women of such caliber must be productive of worthier ambitions and higher ideals.

The shelves of our libraries are lined with attractive and instructive books of travel and exploration, yet the circulation of them is limited. The man who has never gone beyond his own front gate, who has never set out to learn of the affairs of the world beyond his own community, lacks not only the salient cue to the understanding of himself, but of his own country's problems and needs. Contact with people, with the customs, ideals, and institutions of other races, broaden and temper our ideas. But the majority of us for whom travel is a luxury for which we have neither time nor financial means, must see through the eyes of others. Travel talks and educational moving pictures are undoubtedly wielding their influence, but they lack the completeness, the personal touch between author and reader, that a well-written and well-illustrated account can convey.

Youth is a time of exploration. The desire to go forth, to seek and to know for one's self, even to risk all in discovering, is especially strong. If we take advantage of these instincts at the proper time, we can create a worthy and permanent interest in literature of this class, which will go far in supplementing lack of opportunity to travel.

No chart has been made to show the relative popularity of authors. The <sup>1</sup>list of those whose works were mentioned twenty or more times includes the following names:

—Booth Tarkington <sup>\*130</sup>, Charles Dickens <sup>124</sup>, Eleanor H. Porter <sup>122</sup>, Gene Stratton Porter <sup>118</sup>, Jack London <sup>107</sup>, Winston Churchill <sup>102</sup>, Mark Twain <sup>91</sup>, Robert Louis Stevenson <sup>80</sup>, Sir Walter Scott <sup>58</sup>, Joseph C. Lincoln <sup>58</sup>, James

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<sup>1</sup> This list in general excludes authors of juvenile books.

\* Number at right of authors's name designates number of times each was mentioned.

Fenimore Cooper <sup>52</sup>, Jean Webster <sup>44</sup>, Ian Hay <sup>44</sup>, Sir A. Conan Doyle <sup>43</sup>, Rudyard Kipling <sup>40</sup>, Grace S. Richmond <sup>39</sup>, Lucy Maud Montgomery <sup>39</sup>, Jules Verne <sup>37</sup>, Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews <sup>37</sup>, William Shakespeare <sup>33</sup>, Alexander Dumas <sup>33</sup>, George Eliot <sup>32</sup>, John Fox, Jr. <sup>31</sup>, Frances Hodgson Burnett <sup>31</sup>, Louisa May Alcott <sup>30</sup>, General Lew Wallace <sup>29</sup>, Zane Grey <sup>29</sup>, Stewart Edward White <sup>23</sup>, R. D. Blackmore <sup>21</sup>, E. Phillips Oppenheim <sup>20</sup>.

In order that the experiment might accomplish a more permanent result, it has been used as the basis for the formation of a new book list for secondary school boys and girls. Although this catalogue is not complete, it represents the best of the material suggested by them. Perhaps it will seem that undue emphasis has been placed upon fiction. We must bear in mind, however, that this is purely for recreational reading. The main object is to encourage students always to have a good book at hand. If they can be launched on clean fiction, they will in a short time come to the consideration of more substantial material.

## BIOGRAPHY AND DIARY

*Antin, Mary*

<sup>\*10</sup> Promised Land, The

*Muir, John*

Stickeen. (Story of a dog's adventure on a glacier.)

*O'Shaughnessy, Edith Louise Coues*

<sup>3</sup> Diplomat's Wife in Mexico, A

*Palmer, George Herbert*

<sup>5</sup> Life of Alice Freeman Palmer, The

*Roosevelt, Theodore*

Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography

*Washington, Booker T.*

<sup>5</sup> Up from Slavery

*Wilson, Woodrow ....*

George Washington

*Wood, Eric Fisher*

<sup>5</sup> Notebook of an Attache

## FICTION

*Andrews, Mary Raymond Shipman*

<sup>10</sup> Perfect Tribute, The

*Atkinson, Eleanor*

<sup>2</sup> Grey Friars Bobby

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\*Figure represents number of times book was mentioned.

- Barrie, James M.*  
    <sup>3</sup> Little Minister, The
- Bennett, John*  
    <sup>4</sup> Master Skylark
- Burnett, Frances Hodgson*  
    <sup>7</sup> Lost Prince, The  
    <sup>14</sup> Secret Garden, The  
    <sup>7</sup> T. Tembaron
- Butler, Ellis Parker*  
    Pigs is Pigs
- Canfield, Dorothy*  
    <sup>7</sup> Bent Twig, The
- Churchill, Winston*  
    <sup>7</sup> Coniston  
    <sup>59</sup> Crisis, The  
    <sup>7</sup> Crossing, The  
    <sup>6</sup> Far Country, The  
    <sup>8</sup> Inside of the Cup, The  
    <sup>14</sup> Richard Carvel
- Dana, Richard H.*  
    <sup>7</sup> Two Years before the Mast
- Davis, Richard Harding*  
    Gallegher and Others
- Davis, William Stearns*  
    <sup>5</sup> Friend of Caesar, A
- Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan*  
    <sup>15</sup> Adventures of Sherlock Holmes  
    Hound of the Baskervilles, The  
    <sup>16</sup> Valley of Fear, The
- Dumas, Alexandre*  
    <sup>17</sup> Count of Monte Christo, The  
    <sup>11</sup> Three Musketeers, The
- Fox, John. Jr.*  
    <sup>23</sup> Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come, The
- Gray, Phoebe*  
    <sup>11</sup> Little Sir Galahad
- Hale, Edward Everett*  
    <sup>13</sup> Man Without a Country, The
- Hugo, Victor*  
    <sup>10</sup> Les Miserables
- Jackson, Helen Hunt*  
    <sup>13</sup> Ramona
- Johnston, Annie Fellows*  
    <sup>4</sup> Georgina of the Rainbow
- Kingsley, Charles*  
    <sup>3</sup> Westward Ho!
- Lincoln, Joseph C.*  
    <sup>9</sup> Captain Eri  
    <sup>7</sup> Mary 'Gusta  
    <sup>1</sup> Mr. Pratt  
    <sup>7</sup> Thankful's Inheritance  
    <sup>5</sup> Works



*London, Jock*

84 Call of the Wild, The

3 John Barleycorn

9 White Fang

*Mitchell, S. Weir*

Hugh Wynne

*Mulock-Craik, D. M.*

9 John Halifax, Gentleman

*Orczy, Baroness Emmuska*

4 Scarlet Pimpernel, The

2 Unto Caesar

*Porter, Eleanor H.*

45 Just David

48 Pollyanna

12 Pollyanna Grows Up

*Porter, Gene Stratton*

32 Freckles

25 Girl of the Limberlost, A

15 Harvester, The

14 Laddie

27 Michael O'Halloran

*Porter, William Sydney (O. Henry)*

Cabbages and Kings

Four Million, The

Sixes and Sevens

*Prouty, Olive*

Bobbie, General Manager

*Rice, Alice Hegan*

Sandy

*Richmond, Grace S.*

10 Red Pepper Burns

12 Under the Country Sky

*Sienkiewics, H.*

Quo Vadis?

*Smith, F. Hopkinson*

11 Felix O'Day

*Stowe, Harriet Beecher*

3 Pearl of Orr's Island, The

11 Uncle Tom's Cabin

*Tarkington, Booth*

35 Penrod

80 Seventeen

9 Turmoil, The

*Verne, Jules*

18 Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

6 Mysterious Island

*Wallace, Lew, General*

28 Ben Hur

*Webster, Jean*

30 Daddy Long Legs

14 Dear Enemy

*Wells, Harold G.*

12 Mr. Britling Sees it Through



*White, Stewart Edward*  
 4 Blazed Trail, The

# JUVENILE

(Boys)

*Johnson, Owen*  
 4 Stover at Yale

*Payson, Howard*  
 5 Boy Scout Series

(Girls)

*Alcott, Louisa May*  
 19 Little Women

*Austen, Jane*  
 2 Betty Alden  
 2 Standish of Standish

*Kelly, Myra*  
 Little Aliens  
 2 Little Citizens

*Montgomery, Lucy Maud*  
 10 Anne of Avonlea  
 18 Anne of Green Gables  
 10 Anne of the Island

*Wiggin, Kate Douglas*  
 3 Mother Carey's Chickens  
 3 Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm

# MAGAZINES

- 11 American Boy
- 7 Boy's Life
- 8 Popular Mechanics
- 4 Popular Science Monthly
- 4 Scientific American
- 18 Youth's Companion

# STANDARD

American

*Clemens, Samuel L. (Mark Twain)*  
 27 Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The  
 48 Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The  
 3 Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, A  
 5 Works

*Cooper, James Fenimore*  
 9 Deerslayer, The  
 25 Last of the Mohicans, The  
 7 Spy, The

*Hawthorne, Nathaniel*  
 5 House of the Seven Gables, The  
 Mosses from an Old Mauser  
 Twice Told Tales

*Irving, Washington*  
 2 Alhambra, The  
 Sketch Book, The

*Poe, Edgar Allen*  
 4 Tales

## STANDARD

## English

- Blackmore, R. D.*  
 21 Lorna Doone
- Bronte, Charlotte*  
 8 Jane Eyre
- Dickens, Charles*  
 4 Christmas Carol, A  
 29 David Copperfield  
 8 Old Curiosity Shop, The  
 23 Oliver Twist  
 11 Pickwick Papers  
 21 Tale of Two Cities, A
- Evans, Mary Ann (George Eliot)*  
 4 Adam Bede  
 7 Mill on the Floss, The  
 17 Silas Marner
- Kipling, Rudyard*  
 13 Captain Courageous  
 5 Kim  
 6 Light that Failed, The  
 4 Plain Tales from the Hills
- Scott, Sir Walter*  
 4 Guy Mannering  
 24 Ivanhoe  
 3 Quentin Durward  
 8 Talisman, The
- Shakespeare, William*  
 4 All's Well That Ends Well  
 2 As You Like It  
 3 Julius Caesar  
 7 Midsummer Night's Dream, A
- Stevenson, Robert Louis*  
 4 David Balfour  
 21 Kidnapped  
 43 Treasure Island
- Thackeray, William Makepeace*  
 3 Henry Esmond  
 6 Vanity Fair

## TRAVEL AND EXPLORATION

- Bigelow, Poultney*  
 White Man's Africa
- Grenfell, Dr. Wilfred T.*  
 4 Adrift on an Arctic Ice Pan  
 Tales of the Labrador
- Landor, H. Savage*  
 Explorer's Adventures in Tibet, An
- Roosevelt, Theodore*  
 2 Through the Brazilian Wilderness
- Wallace, D.*  
 Lure of the Labrador Wild, The

WAR

*Aldrich, Mildred*

<sup>5</sup> Hilltop on the Marne, A

*American Ambulance, Members of the*

<sup>3</sup> American Ambulance, The

*American Field Service, Members of the*

<sup>4</sup> Friends of France

*Ames, F. T.*

Between the Lines in France

*Andrews, Mary Raymond Shipman*

<sup>21</sup> Three Things, The

*Anonymous*

<sup>13</sup> Mlle. Miss

*Beith, Ian Hay (Ian Hay)*

<sup>41</sup> First Hundred Thousand, The

*Buswell, Leslie*

<sup>12</sup> Ambulance No. 10

*Cable, Boyd*

<sup>3</sup> Between the Lines

Doing Their Bit

*Davis, Richard Harding*

Fighting in Flanders with the Allies

Somewhere in France

<sup>4</sup> With the Allies

*Hall, James Norman*

<sup>4</sup> Kitchener's Mob

*Huard, Baroness Frances Wilson*

<sup>8</sup> My Home on the Field of Honor

*Kreissler, Fritz*

<sup>4</sup> Four Weeks in the Trenches

*Wharton, Edith*

Fighting France

As there was so great a diversity of opinion as to the poetical works mentioned, no suggestions along this line have been included. Although this list may fail in certain instances to meet individual needs, by the general consensus of opinion of the pupils themselves it does offer some guidance to the mass. The main objects are to teach boys and girls to discriminate between what is worth while and what is not and to know not only the best standard works but worthy contemporary publications. These ends *may* be gained to a greater or less degree through haphazard reading, but they can surely be realized more quickly and systematically, with more profit to the reader if teacher and pupil co-operate.



## RECENT ENGLISH BOOKS

- Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*. Collated and edited by Hanson Hart Webster. Price, 55 cts. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (abridged). Edited with notes and introduction by Gerard Edward Jensen, Instructor in English in the University of Pennsylvania. Price 44 cts. net. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- W. D. Howell's *A Modern Instance*. Reissued with an introduction. Price 75 cts. Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Southern Life in Southern Literature*. Selected and edited by Maurice Garland Fulton, Professor of English in Davidson College. Ginn and Company.
- English and American Literature*. An introduction to the chief writers of England and America, to the books they wrote and to the times in which they lived. By William J. Long. Ginn and Company.
- A Book of Old Ballads*. Edited by Cora Morton, M.A. Norwood (Ohio) High School. Eclectic English Classics. American Book Company.
- A Book of Ballads Old and New*. Selected and edited by Guido H. Stempel, Associate Professor of Comparative Philology in Indiana University. Henry Holt and Company.
- English for Business*. By Edward Harlan Webster of the Technical High School, Springfield, Mass. Newson and Company.

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